

What is claimed is:

1. A digital distribution method for transmitting digital contents representing an entity of a product over a network and, subsequently, delivering the product, said
5 digital distribution method comprising the steps of:

incorporating the digital contents into a control program controlling the digital contents and transmitting the control program over the network;

10 delivering the product after a predetermined period has elapsed after the transmission; and

disabling the digital contents by said control program after a contents availability period has elapsed, said contents availability period being set to a time longer than
15 the predetermined period.

2. The digital distribution method according to claim 1 wherein said control program is transmitted with the digital contents incorporated in such a way that only the
20 control program may process the digital contents and, when the transmission of said control program is completed, starts a time measuring operation of the contents availability period.

25 3. The digital distribution method according to claim 1 wherein, when the contents availability period expires, said control program erases the digital contents or erases itself in conjunction with the digital contents.

30 4. The digital distribution method according to claim 1 wherein the product includes various books and documents, music CDs, and video DVDs.

5. A digital distribution method for transmitting
35 digital contents representing an entity of a product over a network and, subsequently, delivering the product, said

digital distribution method comprising the steps of:

providing, by a product vendor, a plurality of product items for browsing over the network;

5 selecting, by a product buyer, a desired item from a plurality of browsed items, specifying a desired delivery period for a delivery of the product item, and placing an order for the product over the network;

10 incorporating, by the vendor, the digital contents into a control program controlling the digital contents and transmitting the control program to the buyer over the network in response to the order, said digital contents representing the entity of the product item selected by the buyer;

15 delivering the product from the vendor to the buyer when the desired delivery period has elapsed from a time the order is placed; and

20 disabling, by said control program, the digital contents when a contents availability period has elapsed, said contents availability period being set in said control program and set to a time longer than the desired delivery period.

6. The digital distribution method according to claim 5 wherein said control program is transmitted with the digital contents incorporated in such a way that only the control program may process the digital contents and, when the transmission of said control program is completed, starts a time measuring operation of the contents availability period.

30

7. The digital distribution method according to claim 5 wherein, when the contents availability period expires, said control program erases the digital contents or erases itself in conjunction with the digital contents.

35

8. The digital distribution method according to claim

5 wherein the product includes various books and documents, music CDs, and video DVDs.

9. A digital distribution method for transmitting
5 digital contents representing an entity of a product over a network and, subsequently, delivering the product, said digital distribution method comprising the steps of:

providing, by a product vendor, a plurality of product items for browsing over the network;

10 selecting, by a product buyer, a desired item from a plurality of browsed items, specifying a shipping charge for a delivery of the product item, and placing an order for the product over the network;

incorporating, by the vendor, the digital contents
15 into a control program controlling the digital contents and transmitting the control program to the buyer over the network in response to the order, said digital contents representing the entity of the product item selected by the buyer;

20 delivering the product from the vendor to the buyer when a required delivery period has elapsed from a time the order is placed, said required delivery period being determined based on said shipping charge; and

disabling, by said control program, the digital
25 contents when a contents availability period has elapsed, said contents availability period being set in said control program and set to a time longer than the required delivery period.

30 10. The digital distribution method according to claim 9 wherein said control program is transmitted with the digital contents incorporated in such a way that only the control program may process the digital contents and, when the transmission of said control program is completed, starts
35 a time measuring operation of the contents availability period.

11. The digital distribution method according to claim
9 wherein, when the contents availability period expires,
said control program erases the digital contents or erases
5 itself in conjunction with the digital contents.

12. The digital distribution method according to claim
9 wherein the product includes various books and documents,
music CDs, and video DVDs.

10

13. A digital distribution system comprising a network,
a server connected to the network and installed in a product
vendor side, and a client computer connected to the network
and installed in a product buyer side,

15

wherein said server comprises:

web pages comprising an item browsing page allowing a
product buyer to browse a plurality of product items over the
network for selecting a desired item therefrom and a product
order page allowing the product buyer to specify, over the
20 network, a desired delivery period or a shipping charge for
a delivery of the selected product item;

digital contents saving means for saving therein
digital contents representing an entity of each product item;

control program saving means for saving therein a
25 control program which is transmitted with a contents
availability period set and the digital contents
incorporated at digital contents transmission time, wherein
the control program disables the digital contents when the
contents availability period expires after the transmission,
30 said contents availability period being longer than the
desired delivery period or than a required delivery period
determined based on the shipping charge;

transmission control means for controlling the
transmission of the digital contents, said transmission
35 control means calling the control program from said control
program saving means in response to an order from the buyer

and incorporating the digital contents, which is read from said digital contents saving means, into said control program for transmission to the buyer over said network; and

5 delivery control means for controlling the delivery of the product, said delivery control means delivering the product from the vendor to the buyer when the desired delivery period or the required delivery period has elapsed from the transmission.

10 14. A digital distribution system comprising a network, a server connected to the network and installed in a product vendor side, and a client computer connected to the network and installed in a product buyer side,

wherein said client computer comprises:

15 a browser allowing web pages prepared in said server to be browsed over the network;

wherein the web pages displayed on a screen of said client computer by said browser comprises:

20 an item browsing page allowing a product buyer to browse a plurality of product items and prompting the product buyer to select a desired items therefrom; and

25 a product order page allowing the product buyer to specify a desired delivery period or a shipping charge for a delivery of the selected product item and prompting the product buyer to place an order,

30 wherein digital contents are incorporated into a control program controlling the digital contents in response to the order, transmitted from the vendor to the buyer over the network, and displayed on the screen of said client computer by said browser, said digital contents representing an entity of the product item selected by the buyer, and

35 wherein, after the desired delivery period or a required delivery period determined based on the shipping charge has elapsed since the transmission and the product is delivered from the vendor to the buyer, said control program stops displaying said digital contents on the screen of the

client computer when the contents availability period set in said control program has elapsed.

15. A digital distribution system comprising a network,
5 a server connected to the network and installed in a product vendor side, and a client computer connected to the network and installed in a product buyer side,

wherein said server comprises:

web pages comprising an item browsing page
10 allowing a product buyer to browse a plurality of product items over the network for selecting a desired item therefrom and a product order page allowing the product buyer to specify, over the network, a desired delivery period or a shipping charge for a delivery of the selected product item;

15 digital contents saving means for saving therein digital contents representing an entity of each product item;

control program saving means for saving therein a control program which is transmitted with a contents availability period set and the digital contents
20 incorporated at digital contents transmission time, wherein the control program disables the digital contents when the contents availability period expires after the transmission, said contents availability period being longer than the desired delivery period or than a required delivery period
25 determined based on the shipping charge;

transmission control means for controlling the transmission of the digital contents, said transmission control means calling the control program from said control program saving means in response to an order from the buyer
30 and incorporating the digital contents, which is read from said digital contents saving means, into said control program for transmission to the buyer over said network; and

delivery control means for controlling the delivery of the product, said delivery control means
35 delivering the product from the vendor to the buyer when the desired delivery period or the required delivery period has

elapsed from the transmission,

wherein said client computer comprises:

a browser allowing the web pages to be browsed on a screen over the network;

5 wherein the digital contents are incorporated into said control program in response to the order, transmitted from the vendor to the buyer over the network, and displayed on the screen of said client computer by said browser, said digital contents representing the entity of the product item
10 selected by the buyer, and

wherein, after the desired delivery period or the required delivery period has elapsed from the transmission and the product is delivered from the vendor to the buyer, said control program stops displaying said digital contents
15 on the screen of the client computer when the contents availability period set in said control program has elapsed.

16. The digital distribution system according to claim 14 wherein, when the desired delivery period has elapsed
20 after the transmission, said control program erases the digital contents or erases itself in conjunction with the digital contents to prevent the digital contents from being displayed on the screen of the client computer.

25 17. The digital distribution system according to claim 5 wherein, when the desired delivery period has elapsed after the transmission, said control program erases the digital contents or erases itself in conjunction with the digital contents to prevent the digital contents from being displayed
30 on the screen of the client computer.

18. A digital contents transmission method for transmitting digital contents representing an entity of a product over a network, said digital transmission method
35 comprising the steps of:

providing, by a product vendor, a plurality of product

items for browsing over the network;

selecting, by a product buyer, a desired item from a plurality of browsed items, specifying a desired contents availability period for the product item, and placing an
5 order for the product over the network;

incorporating, by the vendor, the digital contents into a control program controlling the digital contents and transmitting the control program to the buyer over the network in response to the order, said digital contents
10 representing the entity of the product item selected by said buyer; and

disabling, by said control program, the digital contents when the contents availability period has elapsed, said contents availability period being set in said control
15 program.